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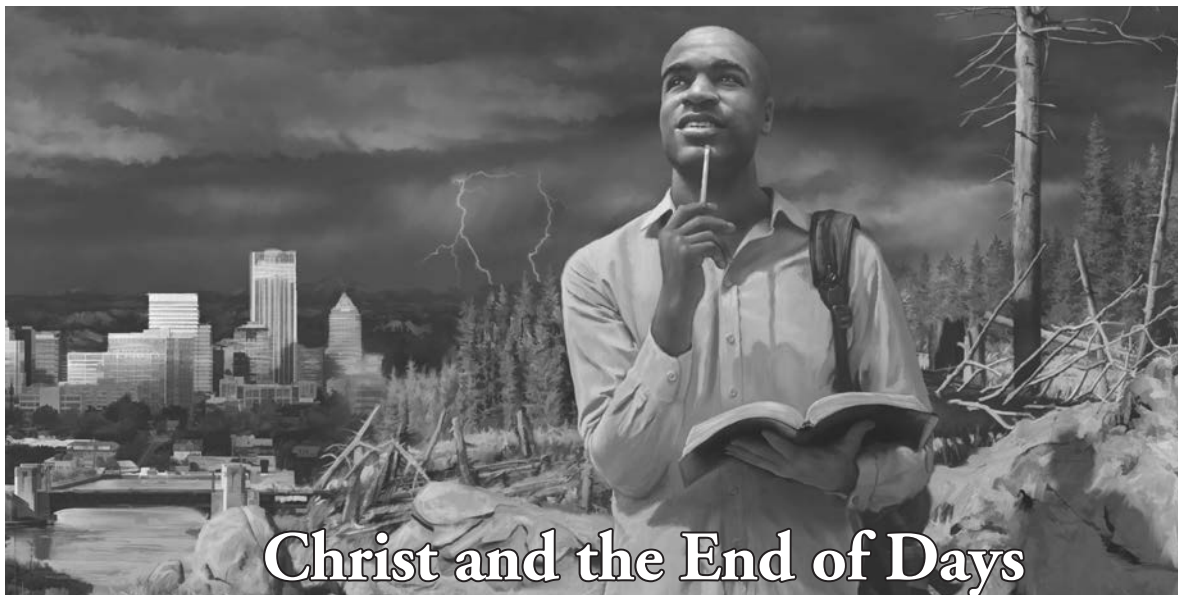
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Christ and the End of Days

In the final hours of Jesus' earthly sojourn in human flesh, He spoke these words of comfort to the disciples:

“Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. And where I go you know, and the way you know” (*John 14:1–4, NKJV*).

Though they certainly didn't understand fully the meaning of what He said nor the time in which His promise would be fulfilled, the men surely drew comfort from Jesus' words. *A room in His Father's house? A place that Jesus Himself was preparing for them?* Surely this would be better than wherever they might find themselves in this world now.

Indeed, not too long before, as He sat with the disciples, Jesus gave them a quick survey of what would happen before He returned. It was kind of a history of the future, and it was not pretty. Wars, rumors of wars, nation against nation, famines, and earthquakes were all, Jesus said, just “the beginning of sorrows” (*Matt. 24:8*). Persecutions, betrayals, deceptions, and trials were on the horizon, as well.

Today, from our vantage point in the flow of history, we can see that nearly all of what Jesus warned about has come to pass, and just as He predicted, too. We can see the fulfillment of two major time prophecies, as well. The first is the “time and times

and the dividing of time” of Daniel 7:25 (see also Rev. 12:6, 14; 13:5; Num. 14:34), which began in the sixth century A.D. (A.D. 538) and ended in the late eighteenth century (A.D. 1798). Then, too, the longest time prophecy, the 2,300 days of Daniel 8:14, which reached its fulfillment in the year 1844.

Surely, then, we are now living in “the end of the days” (Dan. 12:13). But not only do we not know when the end—climaxing with the second coming of Jesus—will come, we don’t need to know. We need to know only that it will come and that when it does, we must be prepared.

How? Perhaps the best answer is found in this text: “As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him” (Col. 2:6, NKJV). In other words, with so many world events, so many headlines, and so many theories about end times, it’s easy to get diverted, focusing too much on the things that we think are leading to Christ’s coming instead of on Christ Himself, who alone is the key to our preparation.

*The more we focus
on Jesus, the more
we become like
Him, and the more
we obey Him, the
more prepared we
will be for all that
awaits.*

This quarter the focus is on the end time, but not totally. The real focus is on Jesus, but in the context of the last days and how to be prepared for them. Yes, we need to look at historical dates, at world events, at history itself, because the Bible talks about them in relation to the end. But even in this context, the Bible talks about Jesus—about who He is, what He has done for us, what He does in us, and what He will do when He does return. Christ and Him crucified must be the center of our faith; or, as Paul said: “For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified” (1 Cor. 2:2, NKJV). The more that we focus on Him, the more we become like Him, the more we obey Him, and the more prepared we will be for all that awaits us, both in the immediate future and in the end, the day when we do enter “the place” that Jesus has prepared for those who love Him.

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How to Use This Teachers Edition

Get Motivated to Explore, Apply, and Create

We hope that this format of the teachers edition will encourage adult Sabbath School class members to do just that—explore, apply, and create. Each weekly teachers lesson takes your class through the following learning process, based on the Natural Learning Cycle:

1. Why is this lesson important to me? (Motivate);
2. What do I need to know from God’s Word? (Explore);
3. How can I practice what I’ve learned from God’s Word? (Apply); and
4. What can I do with what I’ve learned from God’s Word? (Create).

And for teachers who haven’t had time to prepare during the week for class, there is a one-page outline of easy-to-digest material in “The Lesson in Brief” section.

Here’s a closer look at the four steps of the Natural Learning Cycle and suggestions for how you, the teacher, can approach each one:

Step 1—Motivate: Link the learners’ experiences to the central concept of the lesson to show why the lesson is relevant to their lives. Help them answer the question, Why is this week’s lesson important to me?

Step 2—Explore: Present learners with the biblical information they need to understand the central concept of the lesson. (Such information could include facts about the people; the setting; cultural, historical, and/or geographical details; the plot or what’s happening; and conflicts or tension of the texts you are studying.) Help learners answer the question, What do I need to know from God’s Word?

Step 3—Apply: Provide learners with opportunities to practice the information given in Step 2. This is a crucial step; information alone is not enough to help a person grow in Christ. Assist the learners in answering the question, How can I apply to my life what I’ve learned?

Step 4—Create: Finally, encourage learners to be “doers of the word, and not hearers only” (*James 1:22*). Invite them to make a life response to the lesson. This step provides individuals and groups with opportunities for creative self-expression and exploration. All such activities should help learners answer the question, With God’s help, what can I do with what I’ve learned from this week’s lesson?

When teachers use material from each of these four steps, they will appeal to most every student in their class: those who enjoy talking about what’s happening in their lives, those who want more information about the texts being studied, those who want to know how it all fits in with real life, and those who want to get out and apply what they’ve learned.